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CBC NEWSLETTER

for members of the Carolina Bird Club, Inc., ornithological society of the Carolinas

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Hawk Watch Weekend

"How to Spot Hawks and Eagles" will be the theme of the upcoming fall CBC meeting Sept. 25-27 in Elkin, NC. **Clay** and **Patricia Sutton**, authors of *How to Spot Hawks and Eagles* will speak on that topic Friday evening prior to Saturday field trips emphasizing hawk watching. The Suttons also have published a similar title, *How to Spot an Owl*, which will be their topic for the Saturday evening program. If the conditions are right, participants may take an owling excursion at the end of the program.

Clay Sutton, is an expert on raptor identification. Clay is a naturalist and the co-author of *Hawks in Flight, The Field Identification of North American Migrant Raptors* and the National Audubon Society Pocket Guide, *North American Birds of Prey*.

Clay's wife, Patricia Sutton, co-authored both *How to Spot Hawks and Eagles* and *How to Spot an Owl* with Clay. Also an expert on raptors, Pat is an accomplished naturalist, writer, and currently the Education Coordinator for the Cape May Bird Observatory, famed for its hawk migration studies.

Field trips for the weekend will cover a variety of habitats, but the focus will be on places where we can spot migrating hawks. **James Coman III** and other members of the newly organized Blue Ridge Birders will be assisting in planning and leading field trips.

If there is enough interest, some birders also will be able to look for migrants while canoeing the New River. Canoe rentals are available on a first-come basis for those without a boat. Contact **Dennis Burnette** at 336-299-4342 (voice), 336-294-9697 (fax), or burnetted@aol.com by e-mail to get on the canoe trip list.

As of the date of publication of the July/August Newsletter final arrangements for field trips were incomplete. However, some of the areas visited during past meetings are **Mahogany Rock Overlook:** Mark Simpson, Jr. describes it as "an excellent place to catch the autumn hawk migration;" **Doughton Park:** with 6,000 acres this park is one of the larger tracts along the Blue Ridge Parkway and may well be the best all-round spot along the Parkway for both diurnal and nocturnal raptors; **Cumberland Knob Recreation Area:** one of the best areas anywhere on the Parkway to see Wild Turkey; **Grayson Highlands State Park & Mt. Rogers Area:** the diversity of habitat and the extensive acreage of this high-elevation terrain combine to make the area one of the most appealing spots in the southern mountains for bird study; **Pilot Mountain State Park:** a migrant trap for passerines, occasionally visited by Peregrine Falcons and a favorite nesting area for ravens and Turkey Vultures; **Stone Mountain State Park:** many species inhabit the area including American Woodcock, Ruffed Grouse, Pileated Woodpecker, Eastern Screech-Owl, and Wild Turkey.

Friday afternoon field trips will be offered. If you would like to participate, plan to arrive at the meeting headquarters at **12 noon on Friday, September 25** for field trip registration. To assist the meeting planners, also send in the Field Trip Request form indicating the type of field trip you prefer. Saturday field trips will be described at the Friday evening meeting and an opportunity for sign-up will be given.

Headquarters for the Hawk Watch Weekend will be the Holiday Inn near Elkin in Jonesville just off I-77. For reservations, call 910-835-6000. Be sure to mention the Carolina Bird Club meeting to get our special rate of $49.00 (plus 6% tax). The rate is available for Thursday through Saturday nights.

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Birding the Last Frontier

by Clyde Smith

Alaska is a fabulous birding destination! If not, why would just about every birder I know have gone there this summer? But, then, just about everyone I know, birder and non-birder alike, went to Alaska this year. Alaska is a fabulous travel destination!

If your purpose is strictly birding, there are a wide array of tour guides available. *Wings, Field Guides, Attour, High Lonesome Ecotours, Victor Emanual or Simon Thompson*; pick your favorite. But suppose, for any number of valid reasons, a birding tour is not for you. Are you out of luck if you want to see the usual tourist sites and still see birds? You bet your frozen Northland you aren't! Enter the do-it-yourself 50/50 tour. That's 50% touring and 50% birding whether you divide your time or split up your travel party.

Laura and I caught Alaska fever when we saw two programs on the Alaska Railroad on public TV. The first covered the Anchorage to Seward run and the second the Anchorage to Fairbanks by way of Denali NP run. Over the next year or so I planned a recreation of those trips with some birding thrown in.

We flew in to Anchorage and took the train from there; renting a car in Anchorage and Fairbanks. We did all the tourist things--Anchorage Museum of History and Art, Alaska Zoo, Kenai Fjords National Park, Alaska Sealife Center, Exit Glacier, U. of Alaska Museum, Riverboat Discovery, El Dorado Mine and Denali NP. However, in Anchorage we stayed at a bed & breakfast inn within a block of Elderberry Park, easiest access to the Tony Knowles Coastal Trail and Westchester Lagoon; took a Kenai Fjords NP cruise which included the Chiswell Islands where the captain and a birder crew member helped me sort out puffins and cormorants; arranged with Mary Shields (first woman to mush in the Iditarod) for a guide to some birding spots in Fairbanks and spent three nights at North Face Lodge in Denali NP where the bird specialist on staff worked very hard for me to get Rock Ptarmigan, Lapland Longspur and Long-tailed Jaeger. We did not fly to Nome, Gambell, Attu or the Pribilofs.

Did I see Bristle-thighed Curlew, Bluethroat, or Long-toed Stint? No, but I did see 24 life birds and got intimately acquainted with some, like Orange-crowned Warbler, which I had only seen a couple of times before. Seals, sea lions, sea otters, grizzlies, moose, caribou, sheep and a wolf were icing on the cake. Did we have fun? Yes, and I would be happy to share information on accommodations, restaurants, train travel and sights to see with any who would like a low key visit to the Last Frontier. *Clyde Smith, (919) 781-2637, Smith82534@aol.com.*

Space Available on Ventures, Inc. and Pelagic Tours

Simon Thompson reports that as of July 6 there there were still spaces left on the following birdwatching and natural history Ventures in 1998: Hawk Mt. & Cape May--Sept. 26 to Oct.2; Devon & Cornwall, England--Oct. 7 to 20; and in 1999: Jamaica--Jan. 9 to 16; Kenya--Feb. 20 to March 6.

Trips are led by Simon Thompson or Roger McNeill who own and operate Ventures, Inc., a North Carolina business corporation. For further information contact Simon at 828-859-0382 or e-mail simon@teleplex.net.

As of the end of June both **Brian Patteson** and **Mike Tove** reported space available on late summer and fall pelagic tours which they run out of Manteo and Hatteras, NC.

The cost of Patteson's tours from Hatteras are $85 per person and from Manteo $95 per person. Contact him at 703-765-4484, e-mail brian@patteson.com or visit his Website www.patteson.com.

Tove can be reached at 919-460-0338 or e-mail mtove@intercenter.net.

Bird Fest 1998

The Belize Audubon Society is organizing the country's First International Bird Fest to be held in Belize, Central America October 2 to 8, 1998.

For more information contact Belize Audubon Society, P.O. Box 1001, Belize City, Belize, Central America, phone 501-2-35004, e-mail base@btl.net or visit their Website www.belizeaudubon.org.

Hawk Watch Video

Greg Dodge, CBC member from Durham, NC, recommends that we get ready for fall hawk watching with "Hawk Watch--A Video Guide to Eastern Raptors." This 45 minute VHS video covers 19 species encountered at hawk watches in the eastern U.S. Pete Dunne says that it's "the next best thing to being there!"

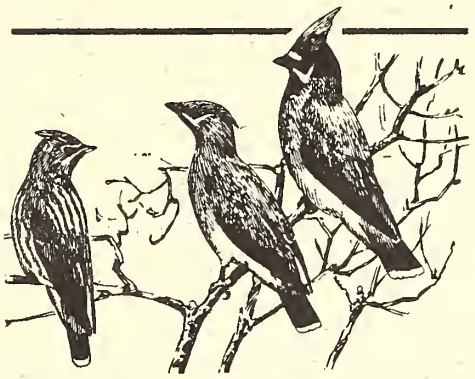
Cost is $34.95 plus $5 S & H for one and $4 for each additional copy. To order call 1-800-343-5540.

Backyard Birding

with Frances J. Nelson

Greetings from DewDrop Campground near Warren, PA, where CJ and I are volunteering in the Allegheny National Forest. We've been here since May 22. The area is gorgeous, with hills and deep woods but the birding is not as exciting as we expected it to be. Of course we can get back into the woods and find birds, but so far as campsite bird goes--and this is a backyard birding column--the birds are a little sparse. One bird that is quite plentiful is the robin. Robins are everywhere, and as if they aren't bountiful enough, each of the four bathhouses has an active robin's nest. When one batch fledges another nest appears and another brood of nestlings is born.

Aside from the robins, the first bird we saw when we arrived was a female American Redstart working on a nest. The male showed up shortly and was so beautiful we gasped. We kept a binocular vigil on the nest, checking three or four times a day, and after several days we could see the female sitting on her creation. The nest was too high to check for eggs so we had to be satisfied with her presence to indicate egg incubation. One morning, probably two weeks into the incubation, we found the empty nest on the ground and figured a crow or raven had attacked. It was a sad day because we had looked forward to seeing the youngsters fledge. Such is bird life, I guess.



The redstarts, however, weren't the only excitement. Once we finished our first day of work and had our campsite functional we sat outside the camper to relax, or tried to. It's hard to relax in a new place with new bird sounds. We heard, then saw, a Black-capped Chickadee. A Veery allowed us to watch it take a bath in the little creek/ditch that runs through our campsite. Now, we hear its beautiful, though haunting, song every morning and evening. To me it sounds like the bird is singing through a long, narrow pipe, but one camper, asking me what it was, described the song as sounding like the bird was down in a hollow.

Another daily bird is a Least Flycatcher, a new one for us. It and a Chipping Sparrow do quite a bit of territorial fighting. We're not sure who's the actual tenant as the battle goes first one way and then the other. We haven't found a nest for either one, but the birds are around all day every day.

We also have a daily sighting of a pair of Cedar Waxwings, so evidently they are nesting nearby, too. That's pretty neat since at home we only see them passing through. Two other birds that we see only in the winter at home are the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker and the Dark-eyed Junco. The sapsucker hammers close to us during the day, but we have to hike into the deeper woods to see the junco.

We are not seeing the warblers we thought we might, but a Yellow Warbler, a Common Yellowthroat and a Northern Parula have made appearances.

Although our campground birding is not yielding as many species as we had expected, the experience has been interesting. When we leave at the end of July what we will miss most is fixing and eating breakfast and dinner to the tune of the Veery. Its eerie melody will be with us for a long, long time.

We will be back in NC for the next newsletter, so send you backyard birding stories to me at *2061 Ferbow Street, Creedmoor, NC 27522, phone (919) 528-1156.*

Frances

Request for Information on Sightings of Color-marked Ruby-throated Hummingbirds

The study of Ruby-throated Hummingbirds (*Archilochus colubris*) is in its fifteenth year in the northcentral Piedmont of South Carolina. I have been banding hummingbirds at Hilton Pond near York, SC (just south and west of Charlotte, NC) since 1984. Although the Piedmont seems not to be a hummingbird migrational pathway or staging area, I have still managed to capture and band 1752 Ruby-throated Hummingbirds through the fall of 1997 and have retrapped many banded in subsequent years.

To minimize recapture of banded hummingbirds in my pull-string traps, I am authorized by the federal Bird Banding lab to mark each bird from York with harmless, non-toxic **green** dye on the upper breast and throat. The dye wears or washes off within a month or so. This year I will also be banding RTH at Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden in Belmont, NC. These birds will be marked with **brown** dye. Lastly, in early August I will for the third year band RTH at Hawk Mountain Sanctuary in Kempton, PA using **blue** dye.

Because we know little about actual overland migrational pathways for hummingbirds, I would appreciate hearing about any sightings you may have of color-marked hummingbirds during migration this summer and fall.

Color-marking of hummingbirds here at Hilton Pond paid off in October, 1991, when a woman in Atlanta saw an "unusual" hummingbird with a green throat and called Bob Sargent, a fellow hummingbird bander from Alabama. Bob drove to Atlanta, trapped the bird, and after reading the band number learned that I had banded it in South Carolina. This, to the best of our knowledge, was the first report of a banded Ruby-throated Hummingbird to be recaptured and released away from its original banding site.

Last fall (1997), a woman in Monroe

(continued on next page)

*[**Editor's Note:** The Hummer/Bird Study Group (HBSG) is a non-profit organization founded by Bob and Martha Sargent of Trussville, Alabama, to study and preserve hummingbirds and other Neo-tropical migrants. The Sargents hold one of only approximately 60 special permits issued by the US Geological Survey's Bird Banding Lab authorizing them to capture and band hummingbirds. HBSG operates several banding stations where hummingbirds and other songbirds are captured, banded, weighed, measured, photographed and released. The following article, which will be of interest to CBC members, is reprinted from the Spring 1998 issue of **Netlines**, the newsletter of the Hummer/Bird Study Group. Dottie Foy was an unforgettable, stubborn, cantankerous member of CBC.]*

The Thread

Among bird banders there is a common driving force. Like show business, the banding must go on. I think that this dedication is brought on by the realization of how little we know about birds. In addition, most banders are keenly aware of the decline of many bird species worldwide. in the case of your banders at HBSG, that is the driving force at our Fort Morgan Banding Station. With this expanding operation comes the continual escalation of the cost involved. This is the common thread that ties all bird banders and researchers together. In the case of HBSG, our mission is always a dual one. Part researcher, part fund raiser. We are fortunate to have the support of our membership in this struggle. Your financial support has made our study of birds much easier. The great thing about our members is the commitment they have made to remain members year after year. I continue to be humbled by your generosity. It's that extra something that I see in your checks each year that tells us what kind of folks we have as members. The common thread.

Enter on Dottie Foy of Oriental, North Carolina. I first met Dottie over the phone many years ago when she became a hummingbird bander. She soon became one of the most unforgettable characters I have ever known. She was stubborn, at times cantankerous and never without an opinion on anything related to birds.

Dottie, along with her husband, Roger, were long-time bird banders residing in North Carolina. Prior to moving to the "Tarheel State" they were active bird banders in the New Jersey area. Over many years of banding there, Dottie and Roger had banded over 50,000 birds as part of their research. She and Roger have made their mark in the banding community. The **Maker of Birds** came and got Dottie Foy recently. I sure hope He was ready for her. He's going to have a dandy in His midst forever. End of the story? Was the *thread* broken here? Not on your life!

I had talked to the grieving Roger Foy several times over the last few weeks as he struggled to reassemble his life without Dottie. i noticed with each succeeding conversation a strengthening of his will and determination. He was bound and determined to continue in some way the work that he and Dottie had done over the years. Little did I know what direction that would lead him. In a recent conversation he expressed a desire to "help" HBSG with our work. Boy, did he ever help us with our work! he informed me that I should be on the lookout for some packages arriving on my doorstep from the "UPS man." In the stream of packages that I received from him was the very soul of his and Dottie's work, their banding equipment. As I opened box after box I found mist nets, calipers, rulers, expensive scales, banding pliers, hummer band making kits and an endless array of personal items that they had tailored for banding. I openly wept at the sight of this give of their life's work. Almost without missing a heartbeat Dottie's tools were at work again. Our banders went to work that very weekend using her equipment in a major winter banding session at our home banding station. The thread remains intact.

Not only did Roger (and Dottie) donate their valuable equipment, but Roger joined our ranks as a Life Member. In addition, he sent extra moneys for our purchase of future hummingbird banding equipment. he knew that I was in the process of trying to outfit a couple of new banders in our stable of volunteers. His timing was perfect. Dottie's hummingbird band making kit is now producing bands for hummingbirds being banded this very week! Rest easy Dottie Foy, all is well. The thread continues intact.

Respectfully,
Bob Sargent

*(**Additional Note:** Bob Sargent is intensifying his research on wintering hummingbirds in the Carolinas over the next four years. If you observe hummingbirds in your area this winter notify Bob at 205-681-2888 or Rubythroat@aol.com. He is planning three or four banding trips in the region.)*

Request for Information (continued)

County, Louisiana, sighted another "green-throated" hummingbird that was likely a Ruby-throated Hummingbird banded here in York. This sighting further supports the idea that at least some east coast RTHs migrate not to south Florida but to the Texas Gulf Coast before a trans-Gulf or Mexican overland crossing.

If you see a color-marked hummer, do not attempt to trap it (it's against federal law unless you have a special permit), but please contact me at one of my e-mail addresses or phone numbers listed below. If you find a dead banded bird, read the band number and also contact the Bird Banding Lab at 1-800-327-BAND.

Thanks for any help you can provede in taking close looks at hummingbirds at your feeders during 1998. *Bill Hilton, Jr., (Master Banding Permit # 21558)*

home address: Hilton Pond
1432 DeVinney Road
York, SC

home phone: (803) 684-0255
home e-mail: bhilton@InfoAve.net

work phone: (704) 825-4490
work e-mail: hilton@stowegarden.org

Membership Application and Order Form

Name_____ Address_____
(If family membership, give name of each person included.)

City_____ State_____ Zip_____ Tel.. ( )_____ ( )_____
(home) (business)

E-mail address_____

Enter/Renew Membership As Indicated:

____Individual ($15)
____Family ($20)
____Student ($10)
____Library/Institution ($15)
____Affiliate Club ($20)
____Contributing ($35)
____Patron ($50)
____Life ($250)

Send Materials Indicated:

____CBC Cloth arm patch $2.00 ea.
____CBC Decals (vinyl stick-on) $2.00 ea., $1.75 ea. in quanity
____Checklists 10/$1.75, 25/$4.25, 50/$8.25, 75/$12, 100/$15

Make check payable to **Carolina Bird Club, Inc.** and mail to PO Box 2955, Raleigh, NC 27626-0555

Holiday Inn Reservation Form
Carolina Bird Club Fall Meeting, September 25-27, 1998

Name_____

Address_____ City_____ State_____ Zip_____

Telephone Number during day (_____) _____ Telephone during evening (_____) _____

Please reserve _____ room(s) for _____occupants. Arrival _____ Departure _____. My check for the first night's lodging is enclosed. Room rate: $49.00 plus 6% tax (1-4 occupants)

Mail with deposit to **Holiday Inn of Jonesville/Elkin, P.O. Box 66, Jonesville, NC 28642** or call **(910) 8356000** for reservations.
Mention that you are requesting reservations for the Carolina Bird Club meeting.

Fall Meeting Friday Field Trip Request Form
CBC Fall Meeting, September 25-27, 1998

The following individuals request that space on Friday field trips be reserved as indicated:

Hawk Watching Field Trip

_____

_____

Fall migrants and resident songbird Field Trip

_____

_____

Mail with meeting Registration Form to **Carolina Bird Club, Inc.**, PO Box 29555, Raleigh, NC 27626-0555

Registration Form
CBC Fall Meeting, September 25-27, 1998

Name(s)_____
(list each name for name tags)

Address_____ City_____ State_____ Zip_____

Telephone (_____) _____ (day) (_____) _____ (evening)

Enclosed is my check in the amount of $_____ for ____member registrations at $6 each and ____nonmember registrations at $7 each. Registration at the meeting is $10 for members and $11 for nonmembers.

Mail with check payable to **Carolina Bird Club, Inc.**, PO Box 29555, Raleigh, NC 27626-0555

CBC Newsletter

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Welcome New Members

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Durham, NC

Jeff Beane
Raleigh, NC

Dee C. Boucher
Spartanburg, SC

James & Sue Brownlee
Goose Creek, SC

Nancy & Fred Byrd
Clemmons, NC

Pat & George Cook
Marion, NC

Craig & Florence Ditzler
Wake Forest, NC

Sue & Marshall Duval
Washington, NC

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